

# Press Release

## HARFORD COUNTY GOVERNMENT

### Department of Community Services



#### PUBLIC SAFETY

"Ensuring a Safe  
Harford"

#### EDUCATION

"Preparing Now,  
Building for the Future"

#### EFFICIENCY IN GOVERNMENT

"Governing Smarter"

#### ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITY

"Growing and Sustaining  
Harford's Prosperity"

#### ENVIRONMENTAL STEWARDSHIP

"Protecting Our  
Environment"

#### QUALITY LIVING

"Safeguarding What is  
Important to Harford  
County Citizens"

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: July 3, 2012

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## Harford County Receives Statewide Recognition

### *District Court Alternative Dispute Resolution Partnership Success*

(Bel Air, MD) - - The District Court of Maryland's Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR) Office and the Harford County District Court are celebrating the one-year anniversary of a pre-trial mediation program partnership with the Harford County Community Mediation Program (HCCMP).

On May 23, 2012 the 2012 Statewide ADR Recognition and Appreciation Event took place at the Conference Center of the Maritime Institute in Linthicum, Maryland. The event welcomed volunteers oriented to ADR programs in 2011, recognized returning volunteers, and celebrated new community mediation partners, HCCMP and the Community Mediation Initiative at the Center for Conflict Resolution in Salisbury. HCCMP's Program Coordinator, Susan Fisher, received an award presented by Jonathan S. Rosenthal, Esquire, Executive Director, ADR Office, District Court of Maryland, recognizing the success of the pre-trial mediation program partnership between HCCMP and the District Court of Maryland.

The partnership with the HCCMP (a program of Harford County Government, Department of Community Services) was launched in March 2011, with the support and assistance of the Honorable Susan Hazlett, Administrative Judge and Michael Esposito, Administrative Clerk, when the first batch of cases were screened and letters inviting parties to participate in pre-trial mediation letters were mailed to litigants.

Cases which are deemed appropriate for mediation are sent a letter describing what mediation is, offering the opportunity to participate in mediation before the trial date, and inviting them to contact HCCMP to discuss mediation further and possibly schedule a session.

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Mediation allows for creative problem solving, provides the opportunity to clarify the issues, and gives greater control over the resolution of the dispute. Mediators are trained to help parties talk about the case and try to reach a resolution that meets the needs of all participants. Participation in mediation may lead to an earlier resolution without the expense of trial. Participation is free, voluntary, and confidential.

From March 2011 to February 2012, 138 cases were referred to HCCMP. Three hundred forty-seven litigants and counsel were offered the opportunity to participate in pre-trial mediation. Of those, “intake” conversations, the first contact between a HCCMP representative and one party in a particular case, took place with 218 potential mediation participants. Four cases resolved on their own through the intake process. Intake conversations resulted in 19 separate cases participating in 21 pre-trial mediation sessions, with a total of 47 participants involved. Fourteen of the 19 cases; or 73.68%, mediated by HCCMP reached an agreement.

The Harford County Community Mediation Program (HCCMP) is a part of the Harford County Department of Community Services and offers mediation and facilitation services at no charge to the citizens of Harford County. To learn more about the program or how to become a mediator, visit [www.harfordcountymediation.org](http://www.harfordcountymediation.org) or call Susan Fisher, HCCMP Coordinator, at 410-638-4807.